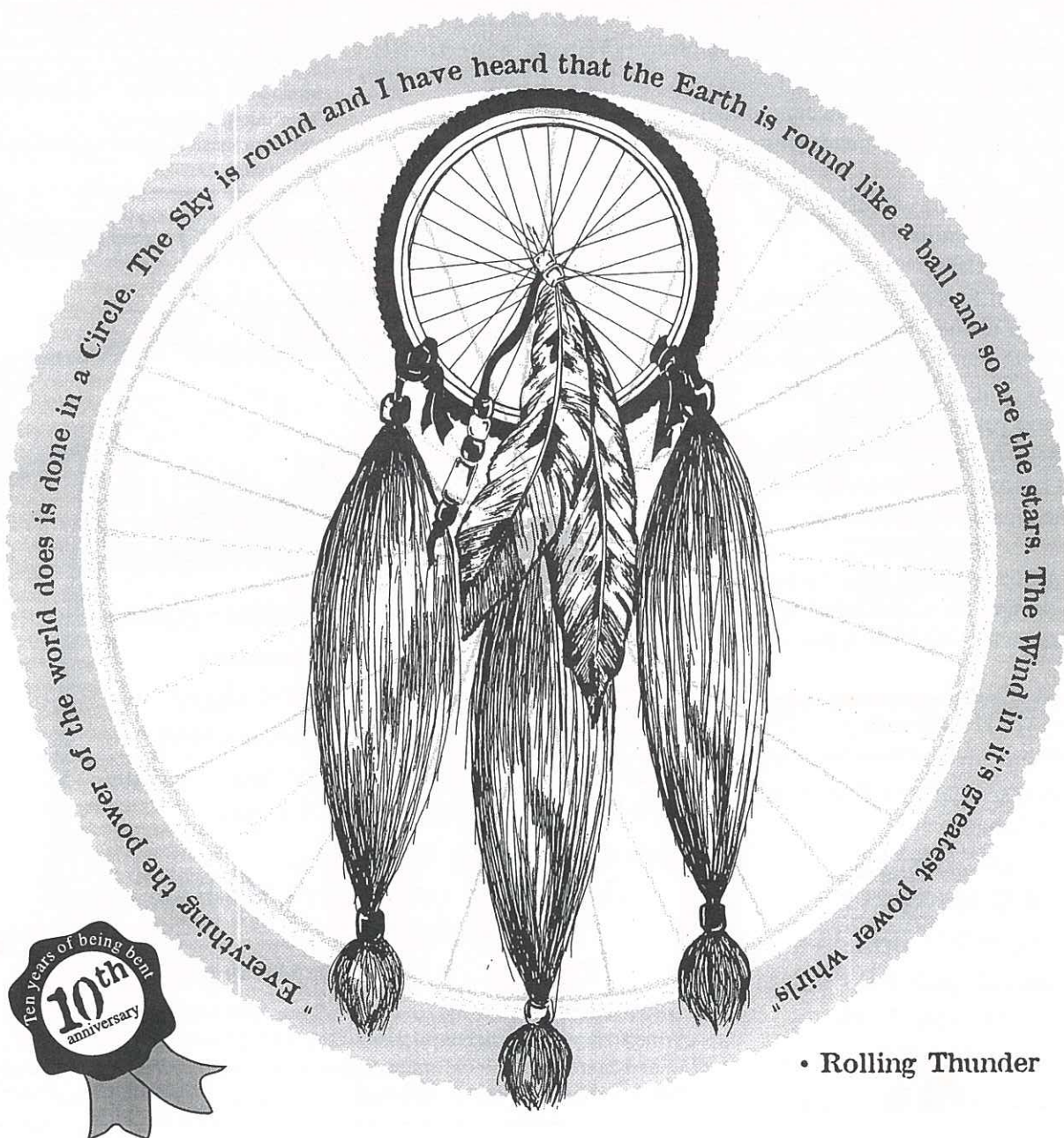


BENT RIM BUGLE®

Vol. 10 No. 2 - 1996

Info Published on behalf of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association



• Rolling Thunder

Attention All Those Individuals With A Doctorate In T-Shirt Design - Help Wanted-*

All right, even you T-Shirt Designer Want A Beeeeee, who got kicked out of kindergarten for riding your bike on your teachers desk-You are welcome to design a shirt, too...

Each year for the last several years, the MMBA has unveiled an Annual Meeting T-Shirt. A limited run of the shirts is made and what isn't sold at the annual meeting is soon gone after an ad or two in the *Bent Rim Bugle*. Shirts sporting the talents of Dan Clark (a.k.a.: Clarkman, or Clark, or Claus, and/or as an occasional stand-in on the set of the X-files as an alien with the ability to build up titanium wonder bikes with the parts gleaned and stored in his basement on the planet Ti-more, for the last two decades...) have graced the fronts of the last two annual meeting shirts as well as numerous covers of the *Bent Rim Bugle* (THANK YOU, DAN!). Just because we like Dan, we are asking all you Harvard educated T-shirt designers to give him a little competition and give our state board a few choices/options for this year's shirt.

The rules:

- Design a shirt with the MMBA in mind*
- Keep it classy
- Make it fit the front of a shirt
- Get it to the MMBA before Nov.

15, 1996 for consideration at our next board meeting in December 1996.

- Send your design to the:
MMBA-Annual Meeting Shirt
P.O. Box 29 Belmont, MI 49306

Questions, call the MMBA at:
616-785-0120

*The official MMBA logo must appear in the design, for a laser copy of the logo contact the MMBA at the address above.

Cover Art This Month is by Don Lee/ dnb designs. The Cover can be yours to wear as a T-shirt just contact dnb at:

dnb designs
470 Market SW,
Sutie 203 Box 33
Grand Rapids MI 49503
616-456-8218

fax- 616-774-3210 / e-mail:
donlee@dnb designs.com



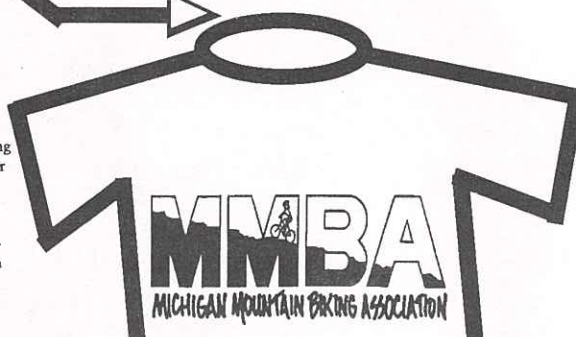
WHAT THE MMBA
NEEDS TO SERVE
YOU

BETTER:

1. Each chapter needs a member to print and mail a postcard once a month to local members, listing Chapter-related MMBA activities.
 2. The MMBA needs people to attend MMBA Points Series Races to sign up members, take questions and forward them to appropriate MMBA officers, and to talk about what the MMBA does and has done.
 3. In the summer not a month, and in some cases, not a week goes by where there is not an MMBA trail maintenance activity going on somewhere in our state. Call and get involved. Your riding depends on it!
- Call your local Chapter President, the numbers are on page 13.

Put Your Head In Here!*

*Please, in the interest of safety:
Always make sure your head is
securely fastened on before
inserting it into anything. Not
responsible for shirt put on
backwards or upside down.
Always remove shirt before putting
it into the washing machine and/or
dryer. Though the list of uses for
this shirt (ie: freezer bag, hand
cloth, signal flag, formal wear,
dew-rag, etc.) are very extensive -
it is not recommended for use as a
birth-control device. Read all
instructions before use.



**Your Official Michigan Mountain Biking
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Sizes: Large & X-Large super heavyweight
Donation to the MMBA of: \$17.00/
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Send Check (make out to MMBA):
MMBA T-Shirt

P.O. Box 29 Belmont, MI 49306

Also available at these MMBA shops: **Tom Nell Bicycle LTD./**
Waterford~~**Highwheeler/Holland-Grand Rapids**~~

Speed Merchant's/Rockford~~ If your shop would like to have the cool
MMBA shirt on hand for your customers just call: 616-785-0120 NOW!

The Bent Rim Bugle (BRB) Part 1

A Rag Is Born.. By Dwain Abramowski

Well, it's been ten years. Ten years since the Bent Rim Bugle (BRB) first hit the dirt as a rag in Michigan, about guys and gals on funny looking bikes. At least they were funny back in 1986. Now those fat-tired wonder-framed bikes are compelling business products or critical tools for serious fun depending on what side of the cash register you're on or for some shop owners who ride, what time of day it is.

But ten years ago, before most of you (us) reading this even knew mountain bikes existed- they were just funny looking bikes. I am not sure where to start, but I know nothing more important could be said here at the 10 year mark than, thank you to all of you who made the BRB possible over the last several years. Now, before we get started, I know I will miss thanking someone who should be thanked and I hope that you'll forgive me for my oversight. Perhaps you could help me out by inserting your name in the blank space provided (if you did help or are now helping to put out the BRB). Those who ride mountain bikes today owe _____ a debt of thanks for keeping the spirit alive that makes this mountain biking thing such a great recreation. (Feel free to reword the statement as needed. Heck, send your contribution to me and I'll print it in the next newsletter.)

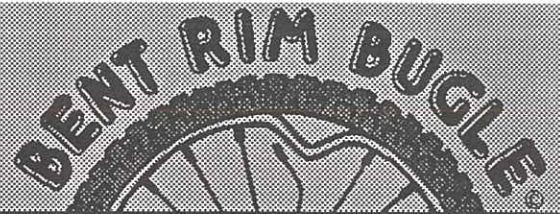
Now if you neglected to use the space provided and don't plan on sending me anything, you are going to have to rely on my feeble memory and I take no responsibility for any omissions or errors...

The BRB was started, as far as I know, by Craig Studsky and a few friends (in and/or around 1986). He lived in Belding and saw a need for people to find out where riding was the best at a time when you could not even find most trails by the middle of June because they were so grown-over and unused. He dropped it off in a few bike shops, which at that time carried one or two mountain bikes. It was one page both sides and reviewed a few trails which were more than enough to meet the demand of the handful of riders who were the virtual Lewis and Clarks of mountain biking, connecting the dirt roads and parks of our counties by blazing trails over hill and dale. In fact, one of the early riders I know for a fact, was a Dale and his buddies did ride over him when they found out that physics for stopping on dirt were nowhere near that for stopping on pavement. Dale forgave them, but last I heard he always rides clean-up. But I digress....so what else is new.

The BRB under Craig's publishing hand grew from 1 page to 2, then 3 stapled sheets and ended somewhere in the low teens in page numbers and looked a lot like a newsletter/magazine. It came out whenever Craig had the time and the money. It was free, paid for mostly out of his own pocket. Last I heard from Craig, was that he moved to Ann Arbor to start a new adventure. Craig was also into kayaking, running, volunteering time at the homeless shelter and free lunch programs in downtown GR and I don't know, maybe dog sledding or something - He was always busy and enjoyed big adventures. Hopefully he is on one now. Craig's wife at that time helped a lot, too, but things change.

This all happened from about 1986 to 1988 (these figures are approximate, for exact calculations use a calculator and divide everything by .203954 and put the answer in a well used waterbottle for one year, fill with a warm sport drink and gulp it down in one swallow. You'll then have the exact answer on dates and as a bonus, most of life's other major questions...).

Craig was running out of time and money to put out the BRB and one night threw the BRB masthead artwork on the table of Bonnie



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Dwain Abramowski

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Christina- Thank You

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Special: Dan Harrison/Doug Nelson/

Bob Papp, ED-NCT

Land Manager Column

Info from National Forest Service/M-DNR/

Fred Tyszka - Pontiac Lake

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Dwain Abramowski

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&

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Dwain Abramowski/John Haffenden/

Kevin Bouck/Jason Jones

On The Cover: Art by Don Lee

Music Provided By

A Tribute to Stevie Ray Vaughan

Material Provided By

"Our Mother Earth"

Use them wisely and recycle.

This magazine is printed on recycled paper.

"In America, anyone can become president. That's one of the risks you take."

Adlai Stevenson

Alsum and Steve Pruett and said, "I'm off to see the wizard". He jumped on his bike and was gone to Ann Arbor. Well it went something like that...anyway no one could blame him. It was a lot of work. All before the days of desk-top publishing. Craig had cut and pasted so much that it gummed up his whole life, seemed everything in the universe at his day job was being stuck on him. In the end he just needed some way out of what was becoming a full-time job of keeping people informed on what was happening in the rapidly growing world of mountain biking. Steve had written a few articles for Craig and Bonnie was plugged in pretty well as a computer guru at her day job. There was still a lot of manual cut and pasting going on, but some of the articles and art work was coming out of the computer rather than a type-

(BRB cont. on pg. 16)

Chapter Chatter

Holly/Flint Chapter

By Rick Jerrell, President

Holly/Flint Chapt. MMBA

**Just Another Satisfied Customer
(or) Just Another "Typical" Day.**

Saturday, May 25, 1996 started out like a "typical" Saturday. Typically it's the day of the week we set aside for any trail maintenance at Holdridge Lakes. The day starts "typically" for me behind my 52 inch walk behind mower and ends with the satisfaction of those involved, in a "typical" maintenance day, of a job well done. As this "typical" day progressed I noticed a huge, shiny, white, new Buick enter the trail-head parking lot. When the car parked I noticed an older couple get out and thought, "they don't seem like the cliché looking mountain biker's, they must be going to pick morels..."

The couple started toward the trail head which seemed very "typical" and were gone. Within minutes they reappeared without any sign of mushrooms and seeming a little bewildered, so I shouted kiddingly, "Where's your mountain bikes," only

to be answered by, "In the trunk!"

As usual that's all it took to get me to walk over and give them some MMBA info and start my MMBA speal and pep talk. It seemed Roger's doctor had suggested that he get on an exercise program and he thought biking might be the way to go.

Earlier on this "typical" day I had been handing out MMBA packets and had met three riders. One from Groveland Twp. named Dave, one from Madison Heights and one of their friends from Switzerland who was wondering why we rode mountain bikes in Michigan when he hadn't seen any mountains. All seemed interested in the MMBA and the trail. As the "typical" maintenance day ended I thought a bike ride was in order. After dropping off the mower and loading my bike I returned to my usual favorite trail (Holdridge Lakes) for a "typical" ride. At the trail head I noticed the white Buick entering the lot and thought this guy must really like mountain biking! As it turned out Roger had accidentally left behind his accessory bag with over \$300.00 of goods in it. The bag was not to be found. He told me that he had a sign and reward to post and that the last

people he talked to were three riders, one named Dave. I told Roger I'd never met the trio other than that morning, but if I saw them again I'd ask them if they'd seen the bag. After returning home from my "typical" ride I received a phone call from Roger. It seems Dave and his friends had taken the bag and after finding Roger's phone number, called to return it. Dave asked that the reward be donated to Holly/Flint Chapter for trail maintenance and with Roger's insistence the Chapter accepted the donation.

Saturday, May 25, 1996 was Roger and his wife's first day on the trail, their first dealing with the MMBA and their first day in dealing with mountain bikers. I'm sure it was a great day for Roger and his wife... all I can think of is - it sounds so "typical."

Potawatomi Chapter:

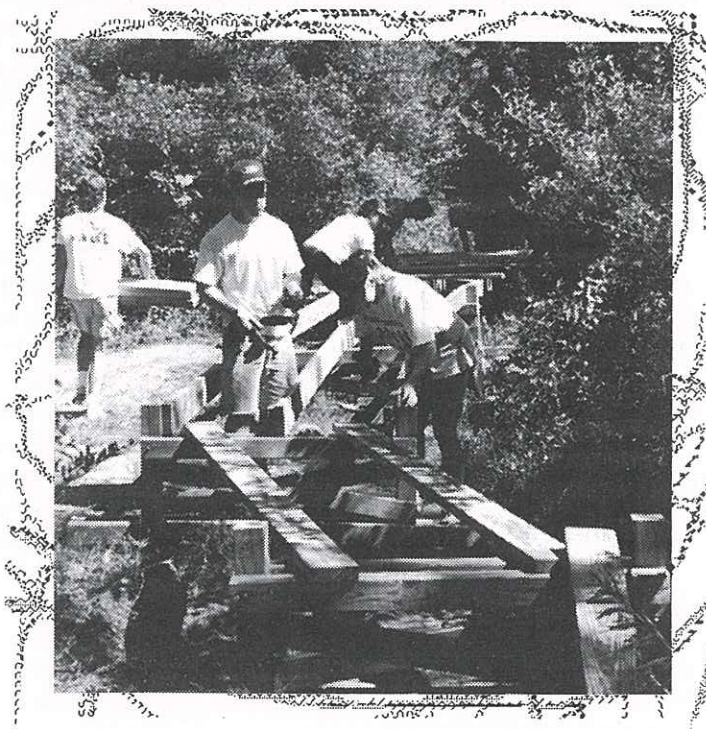
With the help of the Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw Bike Tour - DALMAC for short (an annual ride raising funds to help cycling organization throughout the state) the Potawatomi Chapter of the MMBA was able to continue its care and mainte-

BENT RIM BUGLE PUBLISHING INFO

The Bent Rim Bugle (BRB) is published 4 times a year (quarterly) Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. The BRB is the source for news and information for the Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA). Articles come from MMBA members, MMBA Chapter Presidents, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and other sources. The focus of the BRB is on what is of interest to MMBA members as well as environmental issues, land access, mountain biking events, rides, competition, fun and other activities and information related to the mountain biking.

Editorial contributions and photos are welcomed, but cannot be returned unless accompanied by proper postage. Send contributions to: MMBA/BRB P.O. Box 29, Belmont MI 49306. The BRB also can provide classified ads to MMBA members for free and advertising space to shops and manufacturers. For deadlines and rates contact the address above or call, (616) 785-0120 or AOL E-Mail: Go MMBA@aol.com. (Net: Go_MMBA@aol.com) MMBA Web site: <http://www.mmba.org>.

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the MMBA, Publisher, and/or MMBA members, Dealers, or Sponsors. In other words, lighten-up it's mountain biking not world hunger... Copyright, Sept. 1996, all rights reserved. reserved..blah, blah...



With the help of DALMAC support members of the Poto Chapter bridge a wet area on the Gosling Lake Loop of the Potawatomi Trail.

Chapter Chatter...



Installation of TrailMaster purchased with a DALMAC fund grant at Pine Haven Recreation Area. Midland County Parks and Recreation's Mike Hoggard (right) assists MMBA Northeast Chapter members Randy Wallace, Todd Dewell, and Steve Wilson. (Photo by Kevin Bouck)

MMBA Responsibility Code

1. Always yield the right of way to other trail users.
2. Slow down and pass with care (or stop).
3. Control your speed at all times.
4. Stay on designated trails.
5. Don't disturb wildlife or livestock.
6. Pack out litter.
7. Respect public and private property.
8. Know local rules.
9. Plan ahead.
10. Avoid riding in large groups.
11. Minimize impact.
12. Report incidents of trail impasse to local park authorities.

nance of the Pinkney Recreation area trail. On Saturday July 20, the Potawatomi Chapter held a trail maintenance day at Pinckney Recreation Area. The goal was to build approximately 40 yards of wooden boardwalk bridging several low-lying areas of the Gosling Lake Loop of the Potawatomi Trail. These targeted areas were typically very wet with some large mud holes. With the number of trail users on the trail increasing during the past few years, these areas of the trail were becoming wider and more impacted as trail-users attempted to circumvent the mud holes. The consensus from both trail-users and DNR Managers is that the project was a great success. The chapter would like to thank DALMAC for providing over \$1,500 for purchasing the raw materials, and the 14 chapter members who showed up to volunteer their time and carpentry expertise. Also thank **Clif Bar** for donating the sustenance to keep everyone going! Volunteers:

Reinhold Cordella	
Jason Aric Jones	
Jason Dougherty	Emil Sims
Lisa Drake	Lauren Becks
Robert Hurley	Mark Pettovello
Mike Vedejs	Anthony Prat
David Frayne	Pat Gutman
Jeanine Gruska	Scott Fohey

Northeast Chapter:

DALMAC also supported the efforts of volunteers in the Saginaw, Midland, Bay City areas with a grant to purchase trail materials to repair a trail that was washed out last June at the Pine Haven Recreation Area. MMBA volunteers have been working with local and state forest officials to restore the trails after years of neglect due to funding complications. Again DALMAC should be commended for their contribution towards making Michigan one of bike friendliest states in the Nation! THANKS DALMAC!

**THE MICHIGAN MOUNTAIN BIKING
ASSOCIATION THANKS DALMAC FOR
SUPPORT OF BIKING
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IF YOU WOULD LIKE INFORMATION
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CALL 517-339-1758.**



Sedona 5 Set New Standard For Irresponsibility

By Steve Anderson
IMBA Board Member

(Ed.-It happened almost a year ago but, I wonder did we learn anything, will it happen again? Do mountain bikers in your own area act this way still? What side of the fence are you on?)

Responsibility. It's a theme that pervades virtually every activity undertaken by the International Mountain Bicycling Association and

International Dirt - IMBA Info

Editor's Note: Steve Anderson played a key role in making the first IMBA summit a success last winter in Arizona. His effort helped bring hundreds of land access individuals together to plot the course of recreational activities in our countries many forests.

its volunteer advocates. We implore riders to follow the Rules of the Trail to protect our hard-won access, to make the case to shops and manufacturers that the bicycle industry has a responsibility to support the cause, and work to convince land managers that mountain bikers are responsible recreationalists that deserve to be extended the privilege of using our trails. It's no wonder that so many of us had such a visceral reaction to the Sedona 5 incident.

On November 19 during the federal government shutdown, five riders were caught with their bikes at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Thinking that the park's temporary closure was their opportunity of a lifetime, the group attempted an unlawful crossing of the Canyon on the park's Kaibab Trail.

Spotted during their descent, the interlopers were apprehended and ultimately required to pay restitution for the arrest costs, as well as forfeit their bicycles.

The group's spokesperson set up a website and launched into a paranoid, anti-federal diatribe defending their actions on the grounds that the government has been slow to meet the legitimate access needs of mountain bicyclists. But the record doesn't support those claims, and any biker who's been paying attention can tell you that the federal government has hardly been unresponsive to off-road cyclists. In just the last five years, IMBA has signed cooperative agreements with the BLM and U.S. Forest Service, and both agencies have bent over backwards to make opportunities available to mountain bikers. In addition, IMBA's ongoing interaction with the National Park Service may soon lead to a long-anticipated NPS bike policy. A number of national parks already offer high-quality mountain biking opportunities—including Arizona's own Saguaro National Park—and more are on the way. (Steve is From Arizona and works with the Forest Service)

"One's greatest weapons are the abilities to listen, understand and give. There is no force in the universe strong enough to stand against them."



I-M-B-A
INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

IMBA

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Application Form

A nonprofit, volunteer group, IMBA's mission is to promote environmentally and socially responsible mountain bicycling. We publish IMBA Trail News to keep members informed of current issues and events. Donations are tax deductible.

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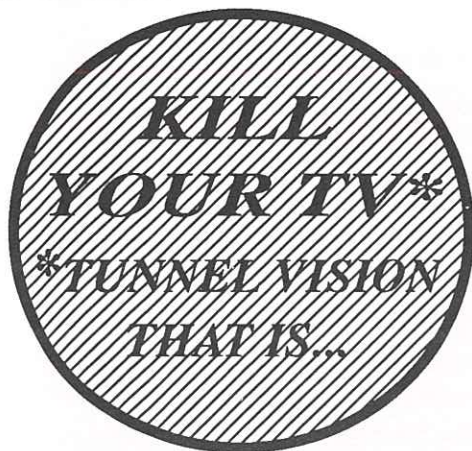
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BY : DAN HARRISON
COURTESY OF MICHIGAN
CYCLIST MAGAZINE

It has been argued that parasites are the highest form of life, because they necessarily evolve after their hosts. By that account, the biker who only wants to ride, and waits for the trail-builder, is right up the evolutionary ladder with leeches, gaillardia, and liver flukes. Last issue's article, "A Tale of Two Trails," looked at parasites. This month, let's turn to another form of singletrack fauna, the hammerhead.

What's wrong with this picture? A guy spends a couple hours tweaking his mountain bike, drives an hour or so each way to the trailhead, blasts around the singletrack like he had rabid Rottweilers attached to his shorts, finishing in less than an hour. Then he proclaims what a great ride he had. A personal best! And the skeptic in me asks, "if it was such a great ride, why were you in such a hurry to get it over with? And does your stopwatch tell you if you're having a good time?"

There's a little of the competitor in all of us, but to allow it to squeeze everything else out of the picture is to succumb to tunnel vision, literally and figuratively. The world contracts to a pinpoint, centered a yard or two ahead, while the brain has room for only one thought: "Am

I going as fast as I possibly can?" This is the mind-set of the hammer-head, and its roots lie deep in our culture.

The motto of the Olympics, after all, is "citius, altius, fortius:" faster, higher, stronger. This summer we saw a lot of stirring performances as another crop of heroes made their appearance in Atlanta. These highly focused and motivated individuals included, for the first time mountain bikers—professionals in fact. Billions of viewers got their first look at our sport. Did they identify with what they saw? Did they get inspired, or did they shake their heads like the crowd leaving a circus tent, and saying, "Okay, but not for me."

Maybe we need to redefine the term, "personal best." To be truly personal, it must come from within. Professional heroes can't do it for you. Nobody can. It has to be in terms of your own value system. If that means minutes and seconds, fine; you're a Hammer-head: buy a license and give blood. But there are other ways to test yourself: try riding with no dabs, no matter what speed—you might have the makings of an observed trials rider. Or try these: how many new things did you see this time? Did you leave the trail in better shape than you found it? That head-high branch that fell across the trail last night—did you stop and clear it away, or did you ride around it, widening the track? Here's a radical one: how much litter did you this pack out today? Someday I'd like to hold a "Debris Derby" event—whichever finishes with the most junk, wins.

Let's face it, the fastest way to get from Point A to Point A is to stay put. So there has to be some reason why we choose the means

(the bicycle) and the place (the Great Outdoors) to go around in circles. The thrill of speed, the element of risk, blah, blah, blah: all that testosterone-drenched ground is covered pretty well. Try viewing biking in some other light; say, as a great social activity. A small group on a trail ride will bring a variety of viewpoints and experiences.

Last spring I was invited to join a group of four friends at Highland Recreation area. The unofficial group leader was Steve Wooldridge, owner of Maple Lane Florists in Clawson. Steve races Expert, finishing eighth in his age bracket last year. He's also a self-taught amateur naturalist. "I have a natural curiosity," he explains. "When I see something I don't recognize, I want to know what it is." On this occasion, he'd left his race face at home, and stuffed the botanical field guide in his fanny pack. "There's a time for going fast, but there's a time to go slow, too." He feels that becoming aware of his surroundings and picking his route carefully has in fact made him a better rider.

As we make our way, a light rain rustles the leaves between furtive appearances by the sun. Our gaze is alternately drawn from the trillium and hepatica blooming along the trail, to the distance, where blossoming dogwoods appear like glimpses of snowbanks left over from winter. Steve points out dozens of species, noting others for future identification. He's also ready with tips on negotiating the technical sections. Toward the end of the trail, he unveils yet another talent. "Nice ride," he offers, then improvises: "A little sun, a little rain; a little fun, a little pain." What, a poet, too?

When you notice your favorite singletrack turning into just another (Kill TV continued next page...) 7

(Kill TV cont. from last pg.)

time trial, you're turning into (brace yourself: ROADIE). Get out of your rut, so to speak, and try a new approach. You can take Steve's angle, or keep it simple for starters. Anything to recover the sense of wonder that you first felt when you rode the woods. Stop. Be amazed at where you are. Bring something tasty, and eat it slowly—make it a sensuous experience (nectarines are good for this). Listen carefully: how many sounds can you hear? How many of them are man-made? How many are natural?

ED: This article appears courtesy of Michigan Cyclist Magazine and Dan Harrison. Michigan Cyclist has been a most committed and longtime supporter of cycling in Michigan. The tenth anniversary year of the BRB is directly related to their support of new writers and photographers in Michigan. Michigan Cyclist has never been a cash cow (not even a cash hamster) for the Castelli Publica-

tions, but with their support, Michigan has hit the jackpot in being in the top five in terms of cycling activity and cycling coverage around the nation.

They have helped cover cycling events and celebrated every aspect of cycling and have gotten the word out to everyone on rides and activities. They should be thanked for their contribution to all cyclists. Directly, they have provided materials and publication resources since 1990 for virtually every issue of the *Bent Rim Bugle*. Thank You Castelli!

On a personal note: Castelli has contributed to the MMBA and the *Bent Rim Bugle*, by letting me free-lance articles and photographs for them since 1990. I was even the editor for a while, until things got too busy on the land access front. Without their financial support, bills would not have been paid around my house and I would have not been able

to give the large amount of time (mostly volunteer) it takes to run the MMBA and produce the BRB, without them attempting to fill in the financial gaps in the early years of our then, fledgling organization. They have made the writing/photography part of my "career" possible. I could easily be accused of not thanking them enough for all their help, so I hope this takes a little off the top of my debt of thanks to you guys and gals at Castelli: Thanks Niki, Hoort, Kelly, Dusty, Don "The Non-Blonde" (now Don Lee of *dnb designs*), Parkman, Tom Demerly and Noodles "the neurotic wonder dog" (on DOG TV coming soon to a channel near you...) at:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Pontiac Lake | <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest |
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Fall In the City (Of Trails)

Fall is here and the Pontiac Lake Recreation Area, along with the rest of Michigan, is starting to change. The days are getting shorter and cooler as we move toward winter. Most people consider winter to be the "dead season" with an often heard term as the "dead of winter". You never hear the terms "dead of spring" or the "dead of summer". The "dead of fall" would probably be the most accurate term for all our seasons, in some religions fall is considered the "dead season".

Fall is the time when most of our plants die off or start to go dormant. The effects can be seen as you ride along our trails. The trees are starting to turn colors as the chlorophyll in the leaves, the life force that makes food for the trees, gets cut off and the real color of the leaves stand out. The reds, yellows and various shades in-between make trail riding very enjoyable for

to make it stand-out, is a common plant to be found in the fields. A lot of plants have already died off, and if you wander too far off the trails you will find (or better yet, they will find you) the hitch-hiker seeds such as beggars tick, stick tights, cockle burrs, and others that stick and prickle you.

More insects will be out now as they had all summer to reproduce. One exception will be the deer fly. It moves on in its life cycle and no longer should they be traveling the woods with you (I know that you will miss them....) Woolly bears, the hairy black and brown caterpillars, will be seen all over even squashed into your tire and hiking lugs. They winter over as a caterpillar and form a hairy, oval cocoon in the spring from which the tiger moth hatches out. Folk tales say that the size

of the wooly bear bands will forecast the severity of the upcoming winter, but usually the differentiation is due to diet and



RIDING BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE RIDING BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE

those who take the time to look around.

A new batch of hardier flowers will be noticed now, the spotted star thistle (knap weed) is a blue and white flower that is covering most of the fields. It is a favorite food plant for the bees in the fall. Golden rod's brilliant bright yellow clusters of flowers will be seen throughout the area, it is used as a natural yellow dye. Many people with allergies tend to blame this plant for their distress and become psychologically geared to react to it when they get near it. The real culprit is ragweed, an inconspicuous plant with an abundance of pollen that usually grows where the golden rod grows and allows it to take the blame for human suffering.

And finally the woodland aster, a flower with colors ranging from purples and blues with a yellow center



age of the larva.

Wasps will be in abundant and pesky until the first frost kills them off.

The hives have

created the next year's queens, they then mate, fly off and find a safe place to winter. The workers are then left to fend for themselves and spend most of their time bumming around in a nasty mood. Humans seem to be a popular place to hang out, possibly because of their body warmth, deodorant scents or, unlike bees who are vegetarians, maybe you remind them of a "big mac".

The birds are gathering and you will be seeing large flocks of all types. Some birds fly south, others move from one altitude to another, and some will

just move to an area of better shelter or food. Our local goose population is a good example, they no longer migrate south like their Northern relatives. They move from the local lakes to the area golf courses or the county complexes as safe haven, with the first shots of the hunting season. They have become a nuisance and are often referred to as "flying rats" due to their abundant toilet habits.

The hunting seasons now start up, as man is also a predator, and the animal populations, after reproducing all summer are at their highest, often too large for the carrying capacity of their territory. Most of the big predators are gone (unless you want to include cars and semis) to help keep populations in check so men and women go out and do what they have done for hundreds of thousands of years. They hunt (this is the pre-bicycle era for the neophytes out there).

Some mountain bikers are concerned about hunters using "their area". But our State Parks and Recreation Areas are for everybody. They are also concerned about hunters carrying guns and the chance of being injured by them.

The sad part about our society today is that when someone is

seen with a gun in a park in southern Michigan, he or she is automatically considered to be "up to no good" by the "city folk." This seems to be a "politically correct" thing pushed by some groups. It always amazes the park rangers that some of the mountain bikers, who keep the Emergency Walk In Center and the local EMS busy on a regular basis with head injuries, broken collar bones, and other acts of self-demolition, are concerned about having a hunting accident while riding. Actually when one considers the insurance companies list of safe activities, the hunter should be more concerned about being run over by a biker.

Accidents do happen and it is always better to be safe than sorry, so if

(Both Sides cont.. on pg. 15...)

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Please Note: In our continuing Dealer Membership Drive we have received some new dealer support and they will be noted in the next BRB. ** denotes special contributions and/or promotions for MMBA members - Thank You very much!

Denny's

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AS AN MMBA MEMBER YOU RECEIVED A LIST OF THE 10% MEMBERS WHEN YOU JOINED AND/OR WILL RENEW MEMBERSHIP THIS YEAR. IF

YOUR SHOP/MANUFACTURER WOULD LIKE TO BECOME AN MMBA 10% MEMBER IN ADDITION TO BEING A PROUD SHOP/MANUFACTURER MEMBER OF THE MMBA JUST CALL 616-785-0120 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

A REMINDER TO ALL MMBA MEMBERS: ALL THE SHOPS/MANUFACTURERS ON THE LAST PAGE ARE SPECIAL. THEY SUPPORT YOUR EFFORTS ON THE TRAIL AND IN THE MMBA POINTS SERIES. THEY DESERVE YOUR PATRONAGE!!!!!!

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Vibram® Honors Volunteers of the Year

National Trails Day sponsor, Vibram® soles, recently recognized 46 trail advocates from throughout the country as Vibram® Volunteers of the Year. Launched in 1995, the program seeks the top volunteers in each state as demonstrated by his or her dedication to maintaining and improving trails.

Each year, Vibram® makes a national call for Volunteer of the Year nominations. Winners are announced as part of each state's National Trails Day celebration. This year, 46 winners were chosen from 45 states, with two awards going to New York volunteers.

This year's top trail volunteers in the Midwest Region are: John Yoder, Ind.; John O'Dell, Ill.; George Patrick, Iowa; Kathy Porsch, Kan.; Bud Hixon, Ky.; Steven Clarrage, Maine;

Kirk Costello, Mich.
(Holly/Flint Chapter of the MMBA);

Walter Edwards, Minn.; Spencer Ulvestad, N.D.; Elwood Ensor, Ohio; Rick Hedgepath, Okla.; June Wheeler, Wisc.

Winners are recognized with a plaque from Vibram® as well as prizes from other NTD corporate sponsors, including a pair of Thorlo socks, a trail book from Backpacker magazine, a Cordura gear bag, and a Vibram® key chain.

Thank you

Don, Beth and Shannon at
American Speedy Printing

The BRB has been printed over the last 7 years with their help. They have always provided the highest quality and most accommodating service helping the MMBA get the BRB out. They will be glad to help you with your printing needs just call them at 616-784-1422.

The Other Side Of The Tracks

By Paul Smith (MMBA Member)

Michigan mountain bikers are fortunate in having an excellent trail system as well as an organized mountain biking association, the Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA). However, an often overlooked asset that Michigan mountain bikers have is an excellent Rails-to-Trails system throughout the state. Currently, Michigan is only second to neighboring Wisconsin in total miles of converted rail trails.

Many of you are very much familiar with converted rail-trails. The paved, crushed-limestone and/or gravel rail-beds are traversed by a multitude of recreationalists, including walkers, joggers, in-line skaters, cross country skiers and/or even snowmobilers and equestrians.

Now, riding along an abandoned railroad track may seem a bit boring when compared to **Ten Log Hill** at the Highland recreation area (see the last issue of the BRB), but a good 20+ mile ride with the rural countryside scenery that is often found along rail trails can be an enjoyable adventure. Riding along rail trails is also a great way to get friends and significant other(s) into mountain biking. Some new riders may be intimidated with a trail like Highland or the Potawatomi as a beginner, but building confidence and endurance on a rail-trail can help them build up the skills they can put to use on trails. It's also an excellent opportunity to take a leisurely ride with friends and family.

For a full venue of trails available in Michigan contact the Rails to Trails Chapter in Michigan (517-393-6022). My experiences with rail-trails are concentrated in the Upper Peninsula and the West Michigan Area. In the U.P. there is a 70+ mile trail in Ontonagon and Houghton County as well as a 100+ mile trail through Iron and Gogebic Country. Both offer excellent scenery as well as challenging bike rides if you ride their lengths. Western Michigan has a popular

trail called the Kal-Haven, a 30+ mile ride from South Haven to Kalamazoo.



The DNR has also purchased a 20+ mile corridor from South Haven to Van Buren County. The DNR is also in the process of completing the White Pine Trail State Park, a trail from Grand Rapids to Cadillac that spans over 90 miles. There is also a 50+ mile trail running from Midland to Osceola County that crosses the White-Pine Trail.

For Southeast Michiganders, there is the very popular Paint Creek Trail, a 10 mile trail from Rochester to Lake

Orion. Plans are also underway to add 34 miles of trail from Lake Orion to Lapeer. Unfortunately, there is some opposition from adjacent land-owners in Lapeer County, so the development of that trail has not begun.

As with maintained mountain bike trails, there are obstacles to acquiring new trails and abandoned rail corridors. Property rights, purchase prices and even legal action have been a part of process of obtaining these corridors for the use of the public. As with off-road activities there is an organization hard at work to acquire and help national, state and local units of government come up with strategies for these segments of American history as a recreational and transportation investment for future generations.

Contact:

the Michigan Chapter Office
Rails-To-Trails Conservancy
913 West Homes
Suite 145
Lansing MI 48910
517-393-6022
fax 517-393-1960

Riding rail-trails is a great way to view the scenery of Michigan. It also provides an opportunity for an entry level escape off the road and hopefully someday, ending on the dirt trail that mountain bikers so much enjoy. Some of you may be hesitant, but I strongly encourage you to take a ride on an abandoned rail-trail.

BECOME A MEMBER

Yes, I want to help convert abandoned railroad corridors into trails.

I want to become a member of the Rails-to-Trail conservancy (check dues level):

___\$18 Individual

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My organization or business is interested in supporting RTC. Please send me information about the Supporter Program.

To help the Michigan Chapter's work in Michigan even more. I'm enclosing an additional gift of:

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RTC of Michigan

913 W. Holmes, Suite 145

Lansing, MI 48910

RTC Phone:

517-393-6022

RTC is a non-profit charitable organization as qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax exempt to the extent permitted by law. See your tax advisor.

Important Trail Event Dates Mark Your Calendar and Get Out On The Trails!

Thanks Trek Bicycle Dealers and Trek
USA for support of our trails!!

TRAIL BENEFIT/MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY AROUND MICHIGAN!

Contact numbers listed for up-dated info on maintenance and events in your local chapter. Call your President for more information. Most local chapters have regular mailings or calendar of info also - Again, questions? Just call them!

Chapter Presidents/contacts for the MMBA

MID-MICHIGAN: Lisa Lazaroff (517) 782-9093

(Alt. Mid-MI/Gen. State-Wide Trail Info):

Dennis Hansen (517) 349-4683

POTAWATOMI: Emil Sims (313) 663-3113

SOUTHEAST: Ken Bednark (313) 699-5555

PONTIAC LAKE: Robin Scurr (810) 363-6089

WESTERN MICH: John Haffenden (616) 365-0468

NORTHERN MICH: Doug Nelson (616) 775-0154

HOLLY/FLINT: Kirk Costello (810) 634-4091

SOUTHWEST: Kristopher Ouvry (616) 731-4009

NORTHEAST: Contact Todd Dewell (517) 345-4523

UPPER PENINSULA: Contact

Jack McHugh (517) 267-0804 (temp.)

October 20 - (Saturday) **Fall Color Ride** - Holly to local Cider Mill and back call: 810-634-4091

October 20 - Trail maintenance Yankee Springs call 616-365-0468

October ? - Signing of the VASA Trail to be done call: 616-775-0154 to find out when!

*******OF NOTE TO ALL*******

Poto Regular Group Rides: Beginners call: Poto HotLine at 313-663-9940

Poto Intermediate/Advanced Rides call: Poto HotLine at 313-663-9940

Holly Rides: call: 810-634-4091

Proud Lake Recreations Area: New Trail Being Developed call: Bud at 313-421-5341

Bass River Trail Development: New trail going in south-east of Grand Haven call 616-365-0468

Stony Creek Metro Park : Bing Eberhart, manager of Stony Creek Metro park, is concerned about the misuse of trails in the park. He would like the MMBA to organize and sign the trails into a one-way loop using the existing trails. Much work will be needed on the project to close some of the existing trails and repair others. All contact for this project will be handled through Dan Duncan, Chief Planner for the Metro park system. **Call: (313) 699-5555 for up-dates on situation.**

Multi-Use Notices:

---ALL STATE GAME AREAS CLOSED AS OF SEPT. 15 UNTIL SPRING

---ALL OTHER STATE FORESTS, STATE RECREATIONS AREAS, NATIONAL FORESTS MAY BE OPEN TO HUNTING. PLEASE RIDE WITH CAUTION AND RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHER FOREST USERS.

If you need more info or have questions call your chapter president... (number on left) Can't get through call 616-785-0120

A special thanks to **Kinko's Copy Center** in downtown Grand Rapids. They have provided the MMBA with special opportunities for quality printing of many MMBA needs. (Yes, even at 3am...) Without their support the MMBA could not afford to do many of special projects that have benefited our membership over the past several years. Thank you **Kinko's**. For a location near you call:

1-800-743-COPY

Also See Chapter Chatter pg. 4 & 5!

The Yankee Patrol

By Jim DuFresne
Grand Rapids Press*

When Yankee Springs Recreation Area received 8 mountain bikes in June for use in patrolling the 5,200-acre state park unit, some of us envisioned the emergence of two-wheeled Smokies.

We half-expected rangers to be hidden behind mileposts, ready to chase us down the trail with a flashing blue light mounted to the handlebars and a citation book in their hip pocket.

So Ranger McDermott, can you bunny hop?

"Heck no," said Dennis McDermott, the park's campground daytime supervisor, who often uses one for patrol. "I'm not a mountain biker."

Not yet.

"Most of our rangers have not mountain biked before as far as mountain biking goes," said Kyle Converse, park manager. "But everybody has ridden a bicycle at one time or another, so we're learning."

When Yankee Springs received the Trek 850 bicycles, courtesy of Breakaway Bikes Shop in Kalamazoo and the Michigan Mountain Bike Association, it became another in a growing number of state parks to send its rangers out on fat tire patrols.

So far, the bikes have been used almost exclusively in the campground and day-use area on Gun Lake, the park's most popular area.

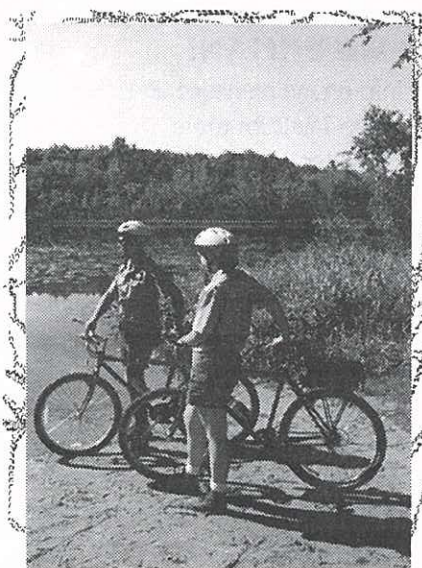
But rangers envisioned using them to get around the park's 35-mile trail system that includes foot trails, built paths and the 13-mile mountain bike system, arguably the most popular in western Michigan.

The bikes will be used to check trail conditions, do light maintenance work, such as upgrading signage, and locate lost or injured park users.

They will be especially helpful in locating mountain bikers. Some sections of Yankee Springs are so rugged that an evacuation system was

recently set up in which radio-equipped rangers on mountain bikes will locate injured riders and then assist

them to an emergency access point along the trail. "Every summer we have people take some serious spills out there," said Converse. "Even when just patrolling the campground, the bikes are better than driving," said MacDermott. "When you're on a bike you see more because you're going slower and people feel you're more approachable. Plus, the bikes are very quiet and that's why people come to a state park."



(Photo by Jim DuFresne)

In one respect, state park staffs and mountain bikers have gone full circle with each other. When the sport exploded in the late 1980s, many park managers found themselves overwhelmed by large numbers of bikers suddenly appearing on their trail systems. What followed were conflicts with hikers, equestrians and the environment, through the impact that lots of knobby, fat tires can cause. "At that point, we took a very aggressive management approach to mountain bikes in our parks," said Neil LaCasse of the Department of Natural Resources Parks Division. "They cause a great level of concern for certain park managers. It was clear they needed to be managed and that we might need special trails for them just like we do for horses."

Through the MMBA and its state chapters, mountain bikers began working with park staffs in designing multi-use trail systems, building them and then returning annually to maintain them.

Events, like the annual Deep Lake Trail Benefit Weekend, a series of races at Yankee Springs, are staged by bikers and bike shops to raise funds for their trails. "This year 360 people raised \$3,000 that goes right back to trail maintenance for Yankee Springs," said Paul Wells of Breakaway Bikes, the shop that sponsors the Deep Lake races.

Eventually, the new activity was accepted in parks. Now you have rangers on mountain bikes saying it's the best way to do their job. "Over the last four years, trail use in all our parks has skyrocketed, with mountain biking increasing the most," said LaCasse. "We're using (mountain bikes) right now to a fairly significant degree and I see our parks using them a lot more in the future."... Better learn that bunny hop, MacDermott.

If you would like a map for Yankee Springs, Contact the MMBA at: P.O. Box 29 Belmont, MI 49306.

This story appeared in the Grand Rapids Press last summer. In a way, the Grand Rapids Press (and the Buth papers all across the state) have been a vital link to the success of the BRB, and ultimately the MMBA. Each week in their *Ven'ture Outdoors* section they cover recreational activities throughout Michigan. Consistently and religiously they have covered events of importance to the mountain bikers in Michigan. Between Howard Meyerson and Jim DuFresne DNR activities, stories on the MMBA, trail reviews have appeared time and time again. They expanded on stories that have appeared in the BRB, and given those who write for the BRB, food for thought. They have listed our trail-related events and maintenance days and from time to time have made sure we are living up to our standards as an organization by pointing out concerns and improvements. Jim DuFresne has many trail-related books out for information just contact him at Peg Leg Publications, P.O. Box 852 Clarkston MI 48347 and look for Howard Meyerson's Articles in Buth papers across the state each week in the *Ven'ture Outdoors* section.

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(Both Sides cont. from page 9)

you are riding in a hunting area - wear an orange hat or vest. Actually it would be wise to wear orange all year long so that other bikers and trail users can spot you as well as make it easier for the EMS or the ranger to find the injured bikers when they are reported to us, "Just follow the streak of orange on the trees and rocks..."

Ranger pet peeves - A biker is found in the campground toilet building taking a shower with his bike, leaving a big muddy mess for the legitimate campground users. When caught he said that there were no signs saying that he couldn't do it. There are no signs saying that we can't go over and "turf" his lawn with the park trucks, but common sense tells us that it is not right.

It sort of makes you wonder about a man who wants to shower with his bike...

There are better ways to shower...does he store it in his bedroom, as it is rumored that some people do? This could open up a whole new line of jokes such as, "Who was that lady I saw you with last night?"

"That was no lady, it was my Cannondale." Or, "I went to Chicago and saw a man dancing with his Schwinn". As the old saying goes, no matter what group, there is always one in each crowd who ruins it for the others and this seems to hold true in all sport activities. It's the other ninety-nine percent who make the job worth while!



Before the Season Ends -

Please take a moment to remember George Watson, of Bellaire. On May 16, 1996 he passed away around 7pm while riding his mountain bike by himself on the Schuss Mt. Trail. George will be greatly missed by his many cycling and skiing friends throughout the state. Many MMBA members will recognize George's style and creativity in the mountain biking community. His graphic design firm, *Watson-Swope Graphics* of Traverse City designed the Brickwheels jerseys, as well as the Sleeping Bear winners' jerseys. George was the director of the 94-95 Trials Events at Schuss Mountain in the Bellaire City Park, which is across the street from his & Jill's fabulous bed and breakfast, The Grand Victorian.

George's enthusiastic return to skiing and riding less than 6 months after quadruple by-pass surgery in January 1995 was amazing and his commitment to excellence in every facet of his life will remain an inspiration to all who enjoyed his friendship. We'll all miss you, George. **By Dennis Bean-Larson**



(BRB continued from pg. 3)

writer with a few bad keys when Bonnie and Steve took over.

Part 2

We Not Quitting Our Day Jobs!

Bonnie and Steve, had a great life before the Bent Rim Bugle. They liked the mountain biking scene, loved riding and exploring new trails and basically were enthusiastic about the fact the BRB was getting the word out about a dynamic, but progressively more complicated mountain biking scene. They put out a few issues together, scrounging up their own money and selling a few ads to farsighted bike shops in the Grand Rapids area. Bonnie liked her day job and Steve like to ride, but it soon became evident that the BRB was asking more of them than it gave in terms of revenue, and more importantly it was asking more time from them, leaving little to do the things they enjoyed, like riding.

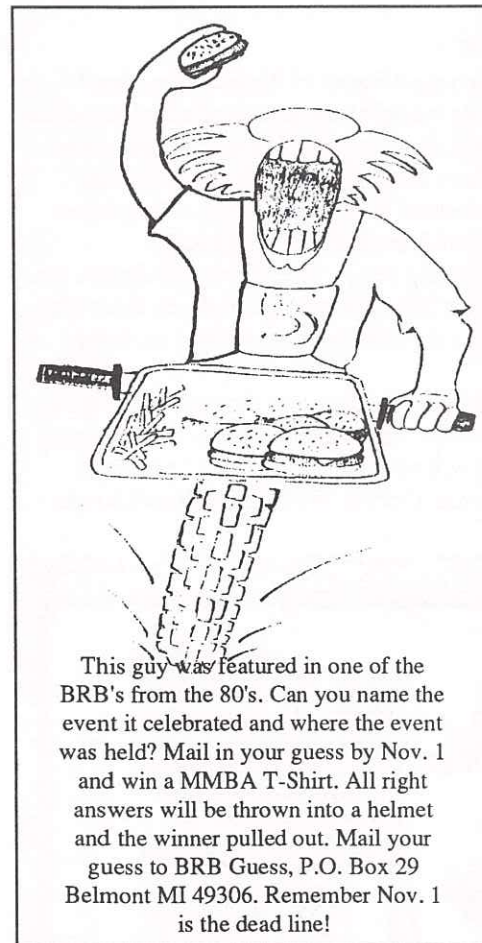
In and around, as in, about this time (remember always divide by .203954) my first article appeared in the BRB. By some this is considered one of the biggest mistakes humankind has witnessed, by others it is regarded as grounds for divorce...but that's for philosophers to argue about somewhere between dawn and their last drop of dark beer....

My first article was about my first race. I explained how I was trying to keep my lungs from escaping from my chest cavity, as I watched my hopes of making a living riding as fast as the wind, deflate before my eyes. I went on to write other

articles for the BRB and other magazines, for reasons my therapist will not let me talk about unless I am strapped to a table, in a dark room with sunglasses on my face.....but I digress.....again.

In the end, Bonnie and Steve, put out a lot of BRB's. Steve had a good handle on connecting the reader with the spin of racing, riding, trails and bike tech talk. Bonnie started to put more and more of the production process through the chips and clicks of begged, borrowed and personally owned computer equipment. The BRB had grown to 12, 16 and sometimes 20 pages.

The pages grew because, mountain biking had grown. There suddenly was a heck of a lot more to talk about, and heck of a lot more people wanting to know about mountain biking. The BRB's land access voice appeared around 1990, when unbeknown to most of you out there, there was serious consideration about closing most state land to mountain biking. The possible ban was arising, not so much over erosion or conflict, but because no one in the bureaucracy knew who to talk to



about the issue of mountain biking statewide. They didn't know what we wanted or what to do with us. And the "us" was really growing in their presence on the lands they steward for everyone in the state. Management of our activity was needed, but there were no "experts" or tools in the late 80's to do so...at least that they knew about.

That is when one night around 3:00 am (remember divide by .203954), I

got a call from Bonnie asking me to attend a DNR meeting up in Houghton Lake or some place like that the next morning. She said, that I had written so much for the BRB that it might be best if I went to the DNR meeting and try to explain to them what the heck I was trying to say, because, well, I was a want-a-be writer and was used to doing things for nothing, but for the adventure and life experienced gained. So I went. Boy did I have things to write about after that first meeting. The next BRB had some fairly important things to say and everyone listened if they rode a mountain bike. We were on the verge of getting our cranks cranked if we didn't get the word out fast about the needs of the DNR and how we (mountain bikers) could help.

All in the same hour (divide by .203954) the Michigan Mountain Biking Association was born, the BRB got the major support of a few enlightened bike shops/promoters (Highwheeler of Holland, Tom Nell LTD., Breakaway Bikes, Fun Promotions) and a few others. (Please let me know if I missed you! - Remember I warned you, now if you're concerned about the accuracy of my memory just send something in about how you helped and I'll be glad to print it....)

Peter O'Rourke and John Dohan, mountain biking lawyers (is there a class for them in racing???) from Detroit saw the need for the BRB to become part of a bigger mountain biking celebration and helped the MMBA become a non-profit charitable organization, with the BRB being its newsletter/magazine.

From 1990 to this date in 1996, the BRB has seen so much mountain biking excitement and diversity. It has always been written by mountain bikers/readers and its artwork has come from the same group also. Ever since the BRB became the "rag" for the MMBA it has always had very little advertising and a lot of words, art and pictures. Your words. As much as the budget of the MMBA would allow. Articles from Steve and Bonnie, Jay Jones, John Dohan, Peter O'Rourke, Mike Clark, Jeff Turck, Brian & Meg Delaney, Dennis Hansen, Michigan Cyclist Magazine. Just about all of the past and present MMBA Chapter Presidents, Dan Clark (aka. Clarkman, Claus), Don Lee, Gordy Allen, and dozens of other writers/artist and MMBA members.

This must be noted, over the last

(BRB continued from last pg.)

several years, Christina, my wife has kept the BRB going. Though I might aspire to write and smash some words together from time to time, I'm surely not an editor. Heck, I misspell my own name most of the time... And Christina is not an editor by trade either, but she has a natural talent to help get the written word in position for understanding and always took the time to make sure I was in the ball-park in terms of making sure most of the BRB has been and is coherent. Without her constant attention to the words I've plugged out on the pages, we would have all been asking a lot more questions about the articles we've seen in the BRB - like what the sam-hill was he trying to say?

I know, I know I forgot you. I told you I would and I am sorry! Please refresh my memory and send word of your contribution and I'll print it! I did not exercise the option of going to the BRB archives to rekindle old memories and reread articles to make sure I had everyone listed. This was a matter of practicality. The pile in my office that contains past issues of BRB is supported by a book stand, file cabinet and a desk. One false move trying to get to the

bottom of the pile where the early BRB's might be found carries tremendous risk. If the pile should fall, the balance of the earth might be irrevocably shaken and the seasons as we know them might change forever....

Part 3

Sometimes I Want To Be Off To See The Wizard!...

I became the "publisher" of the BRB when Bonnie and Steve said one day, "Hey, we're off to see the wizard!" and left me with BRB artwork and a history of the BRB to uphold. I took it because somewhere in the equation I must have forgot to divide by .203954 and I became president of the MMBA, then executive director of the MMBA, and more or less put in charge of getting the thing out four times a year from 1990 to date. To top it off I still had this neurotic bent on being a writer and felt that the BRB would somehow be a "trail" to get me there - to being a writer... so to speak...

Well, it's obvious that I ain't no Robert Waller or Stephen King (is there a difference?). Once I became "publisher" of the BRB I never did to

much editorializing in the BRB; though I've often wanted to be - *off to see the wizard*. Over the years I've just tried to share info on what's happening out there and make sure there is a forum for others to share their joy of mountain biking.

Quizzically, the BRB has never come out on time, perhaps it's because all those who have always said, "The article is in the mail"...coming down the fax, or flying over the internet have fibbed. I don't believe I've ever received an article for the BRB in the time allotted by the current deadline for editorial. The BRB has never been all that glossy (though one time we did use glossy paper because it saved money as an over-stocked paper at the printer). The BRB has always been a midnight operation (seems that I'm always putting it together in the wee hours of the morning even if I start at noon!) The BRB has always been a place where you could find out what the stewards (park managers) had to say, but we never interviewed cycling legends or had shots of riders in the no-fly zone over Iraq. Some may accuse the BRB of being down-right bent and hoky in one direction or another. Which, when you think of it, isn't so bad. There is always hope that someone can beat it up against a rock to straighten it out and get it back on the trail for one more issue, toward where we've always been headed - fun on a mountain bike.

The BRB is your forum for sharing the joy of mountain biking and the trails we ride them on. Let us hear from you, especially if I forgot your contribution (which is likely to happen at 2:00am having to divide by .203954 without a calculator).

Side note: The cover on this issue, really says a lot about where the BRB has been and where it is hopefully going. "Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle..." The mountain biking community that has been responsible for the BRB has always been a circle of friends, a circle of racers and circle of concerned riders, a circle of volunteers, on the trail. The BRB has served as a reservoir of those circles of power and will attempt to do the same in the future....

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Add 10 points to your over-all cool-mountain biker score if you go to an MMBA Member shop!

Portions of The North Country Trail Close - 80 Miles Stay Open...

Dear Trail User:

In 1995, the staff of the Huron-Manistee National Forests began analyzing the recreational uses occurring on the section of the North Country National Scenic Trail which passes through our Forest. Letters were sent to interested organizations and citizens asking for their ideas and comments on use and management issues. In addition, Forest staff conducted field reviews of the trail, focusing on consideration of the environmental effects of uses. Based on our findings, Forest Supervisor Stephen A. Kelley issued a special order (copy enclosed) on September 9th which restricts mountain bike use to designated sections of the trail and prohibits the use of pack animals except lamas. This decision is intended to address the growing social and environmental issues relating to the various trail uses along with ensuring the trail provides a quality recreational experience for the public.

A copy of the analysis (Issue Paper) is available for review at the Manistee and Baldwin Ranger Station Offices and the Supervisor's Office in Cadillac, Michigan. If you have any questions regarding this order, please contact me at (616) 723-2211.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. HOJNOWSKI

Interdisciplinary Team Leader



North Dakota * Minnesota * Wisconsin * Michigan
Ohio * Pennsylvania * New York

This means adopting a new thinking cap for the Huron-Manistee. We're no longer caught up in the visceral issue of whether or not bikes should be on this portion of the NCT. Our new thoughts will be about minimizing user conflicts, and redesigning and maintaining trail segments to last well into the future. To meet these goals, the North Country Trail Association is committed to working with the Forest Service and MMBA on a program of education, monitoring, evaluation and planning.

As I'm sure everyone is realizing, the real work on this issue is just beginning. Posting the trails with etiquette rules and maps is a place to start, but successful implementation will require long term commitments from all of us. The trail must be monitored, maintained, and improved to meet both biking and hiking standards. The hilly multi-use segments will need a lot of attention to guard against the types of damage that led to closure elsewhere. Feedback from trail users and volunteers must be encouraged, heard and worked into this system. We must be sensitive to each other's expectations, and try to develop an all-inclusive vision for the trail in the Huron-Manistee.

Although this will be a lot of work, I don't think it's too much to expect. Given our vigorous participation so far, we all clearly have the energy and enthusiasm to tackle these goals. The difference now is that we'll be trying to combine our unique agendas, rather than expending our resources on battles against fellow trail enthusiasts.

When I try to pick up anything, I find it hitched to everything else in the universe.

John Muir

A North Country Trail Association View By Bob Papp- Executive Director NCT

As most MMBA members know, the North Country Trail Association recommends that bikes only be used on segments of the North Country National Scenic Trail that have been designed to withstand the impact and where they won't adversely affect the experience of hikers. The merits of this policy have been argued to death and I don't want to reopen the argument here. I would, however, like to pick at the policy a little to show you how it predicts our response to the Forest Service decision in the Manistee.

Through our policy, we try to do two things: 1) Protect the trail surface and its immediate environment, and 2) Ensure that the experiential needs of hikers are met. Our past conflicts with mountain bikers have arisen not because of these goals, but because we disagree about what constitutes or

causes "adverse impacts" on the trail and the trail experience.

One thing we obviously agree on is that we value the North Country Trail and the experiences it provides us. We all want usable trails and an enjoyable experience. These shared values are a part of what makes us all trail enthusiasts.

In deciding to officially allow bikes on two thirds of the NCNST in the Manistee National Forest, the Forest Service has taken a stand on the issues of adverse physical and experiential impacts. For now, the opportunity for trail enthusiasts to influence this decision is over. We still have significant concerns about the sustainability of this type of use over much of the trail. Likewise, we still maintain that, for many hikers, bike use is incompatible with the experiences they seek. However, we also recognize that all parties must now work together, within the FS guidelines, to ensure that the trail and experiences we each value are protected.

The North Country Trail - 80/30 - A Hiker/Mountain Biker Perspective-

By Dwain Abramowski

The US Forest Service - Huron-Manistee National Forest has completed a lengthy study of the North Country Trail.

The facts: About 80 miles are open
About 30 miles are closed.

There were about five different scenarios proposed for the Huron/Manistee section of the North Country Trail. Ranging from all opened to all closed. Some officials in the National Parks, who administer the North Country Trail, were opposed to bikes on any section of the trail. Some officials of the Huron/Manistee (U.S. Forest Service) were not opposed to a non-motorized multi-use position allowing bikes on the trail. The membership of the NCT was somewhat divided. Meanwhile, members of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association had been volunteering their time maintaining the trail along with North Country Trail volunteers, who with the help of the forest service put in the Huron-Manistee sections of the trail. But basically, for the last several months everyone was waiting for an official position to find out where they fit in to the use and responsibility for the trail.

Understandably, the biggest complaint from hikers on the trail was that of solitude. The expectation of traveling down a trail alone for miles at a time beckoned each of their foot-steps to unfold a special secret, the secret perhaps: "in solitude alone can a man know true freedom" (Montaigne). For mountain bikers, the adventure of meeting mother nature through the eyes of dynamic motion called to the child in them, hailing them from every grain of sand, leaf, rock, root and stick on the trail. In riding a bike there is a child-like joy waiting for all of us and "to miss the joy is to miss it all" (R.L.Stevenson).

But the talk is finished. The sharing has begun and our care and responsibility for the trail is now duty. To share the sections open to multi-use and abstain from mountain biking on those sections

closed to multi-use.

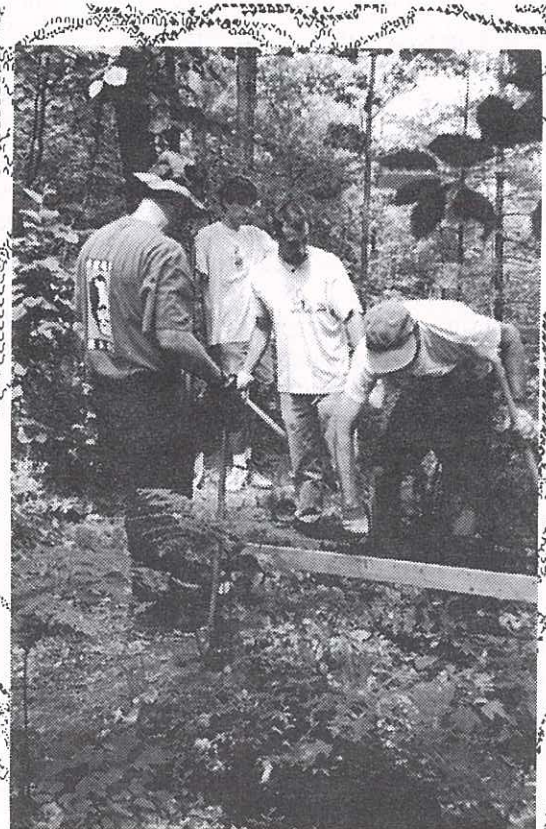
The closed sections are from Dilling Road South to M-55 (10 miles), from the Bowman Lake trail-head near Baldwin south to Nichols Lake (17 miles) and from M-20 south to Croton Dam (19 miles). Mountain bikers retained some of the most glorious and inspiring ribbons of trail including the Marilla trail-head south from M-115 and the US 10 portion of trail North through Freesoil. This is not to say that the pine plantations north of the Croton Dam and other portions of the NCT didn't have their unequivocal magic when put into motion on a bike. They will be missed. But the solitude has been gifted to all those who would take the time to seek it on these sections closed to mountain biking. It should be noted that the fact is, other than a busy weekend in the summer or fall, the gift of solitude is there for taking, like a big red raspberry in the bounty of mother nature's most fruitful season (sorry...the trail just does that to you...), for anyone who so chooses to ride (open portions) and/or hike the trail, just about any other day of the year. This was true even before the decision.

Much can be said about the nature and implication of positions by officials of the National Parks Service, officials of the Huron/Manistee National Forest, the NCT, and the

MMBA. But the fact of the matter is the trail doesn't take anything or give anything to anyone who chooses to use it. The beauty of its fall colors or the harsh unforgiving blanket of winter, or the potential of spring and summer is there regardless of the intentions of humans. The trail does not care for - or about us as hikers or bikers. Anything that the trail "is" - is brought there by each of us who use it.

When I bike or hike the North Country Trail, I will bring to the trail a sense of wonder, an appreciation of its beauty and a respect for its power. The trail "will be what it is" with each step I take or circle of my wheel. I will take joy in my freedom on the NCT and find freedom in my joy on the NCT.

I wish the same to you.



Work on the North Country Trail by
the Western Michigan and Northern
Michigan Chapters of the MMBA
June 1996 - North of M-20

MMBA MISSION STATEMENT

To promote responsible mountain biking and to work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection through interaction with policy makers, the cycling industry, race promoters, mountain bikers and other trail users.

Sharing The North Country Trail

By Northern Chapter President
Doug Nelson

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The United States Forest Service (USFS) issued an Order of the Forest supervisor on September 9 with regard to the use of mountain bikes and pack animals on the sections of the North Country Trail located on the sections of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. In short, 80 miles of the 118 total miles of this popular single-track system will remain open to mountain biking. The three closed segments include the miles from Croton Dam to the M-20 trail-head (19 miles), the section from the Nickols Lake Trail head to the Bowman Lake trail-head (17.2 miles) and the segment from M-55 to Dilling Road (10.4 miles). All other sections are recognized as open for mountain biking, including the popular sections from Dilling Road to Marilla, the Udell Hills, the Ward Hills, and the M-20 section. All Sections of the NCT located on Michigan DNR land continue to remain open to mountain biking. The entire 118 miles are closed to pack animals except llamas.

This decision puts to rest nearly 16 months of study by the USFS. Despite great pressure from the National Park Service and the North Country Trail Association, the Forest service made an autonomous decision as land managers of the 118 miles on the Huron-Manistee

National Forest. Mountain bikes are finally recognized as legitimate users and caretakers of the North Country Trail, thanks in large part to the MMBA and its northern Chapter. A consistent, strong and sensible advocacy strategy was instituted by the Northern Chapter, including an organized statewide letter writing campaign to both the USFS and Senator Carl Levin and Representative Peter Hoekstra, a statewide petition drive, meeting by State and Northern Chapter MMBA officers with USFS, and regular trail maintenance days on segments of the NCT in the Manistee National Forest. The decision by the Forest Service was precedent setting, since it recognizes the mountain bike as a legitimate non-motorized user on 80 miles of premier single-track.

Without the MMBA, and specifically the efforts of the Northern Chapter, it is very likely these miles would have been lost to a short-sighted strategy by the National Parks Service to close the trail to bikes.

More than ever, Michigan's mountain bikers need to use common sense when riding the open sections of the NCT. A few suggestions:

1. HONOR the closures and stay off the restricted sections. Call the Manistee Ranger District at 616-723-2211 for maps or open sections.
2. Ride the trail in small groups.
3. Since the trail is two-way, be always aware of hikers or riders

coming toward you.

4. Yield the trail to hikers and backpackers. Create a little good will! Get off your bike and walk, even if they step to the side.

5. Don't use this trail to train for racing/race training. Ride it hard, but ride it with care and concern for the other users.

6. DON'T SKID YOUR REAR TIRE! Good riders don't need to lock up the rear tire and skid, causing impact problems. (Don't skid on any trail for that matter!)

7. Do at least one trail maintenance day a year if you use the NCT regularly. The Northern and Western Chapter will keep you posted on upcoming trail days on the NCT.

8. Applaud the USFS for its faith in you, as mountain bikers! A card or letter of thanks to John Hojnowski, Manistee ranger District, 412 Red Apple Road, Manistee, MI 49660 or call the office at 616-723-2211.

October is probably the best time to ride the NCT on the Manistee National Forest. The colors will be perfect - few bugs - less heat - and great single-track! As you ride it this year, take pride in your MMBA and its collective influences. There is indeed cause for celebration and renewed responsibility for what many consider one of the most beautiful trails in the country.

General/MMBA MEMBERSHIP

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